

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) An apparatus for removing a needle from a medical device, comprising:

a container defining a chamber, said container including a container top having an aperture communicating with said chamber;

a needle removing fixture rotatably mounted to said container top and rotatable with respect thereto free of shearing surfaces, said needle removing fixture being positioned at least partially within said chamber and including a passage for receiving a needle extending through said aperture in said container top; and

means a handle coupled to said needle removing fixture for rotating said needle removing fixture.

2. (Original) The apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said passage includes an axis that is substantially alignable with said aperture in said container top.

3. (Original) The apparatus as described in claim 2, wherein said passage extends entirely through said needle removing fixture.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Amended) The apparatus as described in claim 4, wherein said handle extends at least partially outside said container.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Amended) The apparatus as described in claim 6, wherein said needle removing fixture includes a shaft having a working section located thereon, said passage being formed in said working section of said shaft; and

further comprising a pair of bearing blocks for rotatably supporting the opposing ends of said shaft, each of said bearing blocks being mounted to said container top.

8. (Original) The apparatus as described in claim 7, further comprising a mounting plate, said mounting plate cooperating with said container top to mount said bearing blocks thereto, said opening being formed in said mounting plate.

9. (Amended) The apparatus as described in claim 6, wherein said container includes a base, said container top being removably mounted to said base.

10. (Original) The apparatus as described in claim 9, further comprising a collection receptacle positioned within said container for collecting the needle removed from the medical device.

11. (Original) The apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said passage includes an axis, said needle removing fixture being rotationally positionable such that said axis of said passage is substantially perpendicular to said container top.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Amended) A method of removing a needle from a medical device, comprising:

inserting said needle of said medical device into a passage of a needle removing fixture, wherein said needle removing fixture is rotatably mounted to a top of a container, and

rotating said needle removing fixture about an axis via a handle while maintaining said medical device in a substantially stationary position, thereby removing said needle from said medical device without shearing thereof.

16. (Original) The method as described in claim 15, further including capturing said needle in a container once removed from said medical device.

17. (Amended) The method as described in claim 16, including passing said needle through an aperture in ~~a~~ said top of said container prior to inserting said needle into said passage.

18. (Original) The method as described in claim 17, including causing said medical device to engage said container top.

19. (Original) The method as described in claim 17, including aligning said passage and said aperture prior to inserting said needle into said passage.

20. (Original) The method as described in claim 15, including rotating said needle removing fixture about an axis running substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of said passage.

21. (Amended) A method of removing a metal needle from a plastic hub of a medical device, comprising:

securing said medical device in a substantially stationary position whereby said needle is located at a predetermined position;

disconnecting said metal needle from said plastic hub without shearing of said needle by rotating said needle in a needle removal fixture that is rotatably mounted to a container, wherein said needle is deformed while simultaneously deforming said metal needle to prevent reuse thereof.

22. (Original) The method as described in claim 21, further including capturing said needle in a container once removed from said medical device.

23. (Amended) The method as described in claim 22, including passing said needle through an aperture in a top of said container prior to inserting said needle into ~~said~~ a passage.

24. (Original) The method as described in claim 23, including causing said medical device to engage said container top.

25. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for removing a needle from a medical device, comprising:

a container defining a chamber, said container including a container top having a first aperture communicating with said chamber;

a recessed sleeve extending from said container top into said chamber, said container top including a second aperture communicating with said sleeve, said second aperture having a diameter greater than the diameter of said first aperture, said sleeve including a third aperture communicating with said chamber, said third aperture being substantially co-axially aligned with said second aperture;

a needle removing fixture mounted to said container and rotatable with respect thereto free of shearing surfaces, said needle removing fixture being positioned at least partially within said chamber and including first and second working sections having diameters  $D_1$  and  $D_2$ , respectively, wherein  $D_1$  is greater than  $D_2$ , said first working section including a first passage for receiving a needle extending through said first aperture in said container top, said second working section including a second passage for receiving a needle extending through said third aperture in said recessed sleeve; and

means for rotating said needle removing fixture.

26. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as described in claim 25, wherein said first passage includes an axis that is substantially alignable with said first aperture in said container top; and wherein said second passage includes an axis that is substantially alignable with said third aperture in said container top.

27. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as described in claim 25, wherein said first and second passages extend entirely through said needle removing fixture.

28. (Withdrawn) The apparatus as described in claim 25, wherein said means for rotating includes a key pivotally coupled to said needle removing fixture.

29. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said first aperture defines a first plane and said third aperture defines a second plane, and wherein said first working section is spaced a distance  $T_1$  from said first plane and said second working section is spaced a distance  $T_2$  from said second plane, and wherein  $T_1$  is greater than